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Farm Broadcasters Letter

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U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

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SPENDING REDUCTIONS - 4.3 PCT.

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block announced that the USDA soon will begin spending reductions in its commodity programs to comply with President Reagan's Feb. 1 sequester order issued under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act. Block said the order calls for a USDA spending reduction of $1.3 billion for fiscal 1986, equal to a 4.3 pct. reduction in those USDA outlays subject to provisions of the Act. In the 1986 Commodity Credit Corporation programs, the reduction totals $823 million. No reductions will be made in price support loans, purchase agreements and regular deficiency payments made for 1985 crops. Target prices and loan and purchase rates will not change for 1986 crops. Payments made in-kind or by negotiable commodity certificates will not be subject to reduction. Reductions of 4.3 pct. will apply to checks paid to producers for commodity loans, deficiency and diversion payments for 1986 crops, and to payments for certificates that producers redeem for cash. Both advance and final payments will be subject to the reduction. The reductions will be made after the maximum payment limitation of $50,000 per producer has been applied. Producers entering 1986-crop programs will be notified at the time of sign-up how programs will be affected.

USSR WINTER GRAIN

Above-normal January precipitation covered most winter grain areas of the USSR, increasing moisture supplies, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Temperatures in January were above normal over much of European USSR. The unseasonably warm weather was followed by bitter cold air from Siberia in early February. Snow cover likely protected winter grains. Overall, temperatures did not fall low enough to produce widespread winterkill. However, some areas were more vulnerable, particularly those adjacent to the Black Sea where some crop growth was reported in January.

CITRUS CANKER

Because of a lack of funds, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will not be able to participate in the state-federal citrus canker eradication program in Florida after March 31. The State of Florida will have to establish adequate regulatory and control programs, including survey and certification of commercial groves and nurseries, if fresh fruit is to be allowed to move out of the state after March 31. The USDA became involved in the program on Oct. 1984.

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USSR IMPORT ESTIMATES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimate of USSR grain imports for July-June 1985/86 remains at 35 million tons, including 17 million of wheat and coarse grains and one million of miscellaneous grains, rice and pulses. To date, the Soviets have covered over 90 pct. of their projected imports of 17 million tons of wheat. Total purchases of coarse grain are now estimated at close to 10 million tons. The EC was the major seller this past month. Argentina appears to have sold very little wheat to the USSR. This year's poor harvest has sharply reduced Argentina's export availability.

USSR-ARGENTINA GRAIN AGREEMENT

The USSR and Argentina have agreed to extend the 1980/85 grain agreement for another 5 years, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The total amount of grains and soybeans to be purchased annually by the USSR remains at 4 million tons of coarse grains and 500,000 tons of soybeans. Wheat trade is not included.

U.S. SOYBEANS TO USSR

Private exporters reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 174,400 tons of soybeans for delivery to the USSR during the 1985/86 marketing year. Sales of soybeans to the USSR for delivery during the 1985/86 marketing year now total 1.2 million tons. This is the largest volume of U.S. soybean sales to the Soviets since 1978/79, when 1.2 million tons were exported.

TOTAL U.S. STOCKS OF FEED GRAINS & WHEAT

Stocks of the four feed grains - corn, sorghum, oats and barley - totaled 242 million metric tons on Jan. 1, 1986, up 33 pct. from Jan. 1 last year and 56 pct. more than Jan. 1, 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Wheat stocks, at 69 million metric tons, were up 18 pct. from Jan. 1 a year ago and up 9 pct. from Jan. 1, 1984.

U.S. CORN STOCKS

Corn stored in all positions on Jan. 1, 1986, is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 7.88 billion bushels, 34 pct. more than the Jan. 1, 1985, total of 5.86 billion bushels. Of the total corn stocks on hand Jan. 1, 1986, 70 pct., or 5.53 billion bushels, was stored on farms. This is 28 pct. more than the Jan. 1 farm stocks of a year ago. Off-farm stocks, at 2.35 billion bushels, are 51 pct. above Jan. 1, 1985.

U.S. ALL WHEAT STOCKS

All wheat stored in all positions on Jan. 1, 1986, is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 2.54 billion bushels, 18 pct. more than the 2.14 billion on hand a year earlier. Wheat stored on farms accounts for 1.02 billion bushels, or 40 pcts. of the total stocks on Jan. 1, 1986. Off-farm stocks total 1.51 billion bushels. Farm stocks are up 10 pct. from Jan. 1, 1985, while off-farm stocks are up 25 pct.

WORLD OILSEEDS

The February forecast of 1985/86 world oilseed production is placed at 194.2 million tons by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is virtually unchanged from last month's forecast. The 1985/86 production is now forecast to increase 5.4 million tons above the 1984/85 level. A 1.8 million ton decrease in soybean production was offset by increases in 5 other oilseeds. World oilseed imports were increased by 0.9 million tons. Virtually all of this was in soybeans.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

USDA BUDGET...Stephen Dewhurst, Director of USDA's Budget and Planning Analysis, outlines some of the details and provisions in the proposed 1987 budget for the Department of Agriculture. Vic Powell interviews. (121)

DAIRY TERMINATION PROGRAM...The Dairy Termination Program is expected to cut about 800,000 cows from 11 million in production. Jerry Newcomb with USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service outlines the requirements for herd liquidation. Vic Powell interviews. (122)

U.S. WEATHER UPDATE...USDA Chief meteorologist Dr. Norton Strommen focuses on the current weather outlook in the U.S., including the effects of the cold weather on the Florida orange crop as well as the winter wheat crop. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (123)

AVIAN INFLUENZA...Dr. Jerry Fichtner, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, describes the current situation in Pennsylvania with Avian Influenza and the effects this disease has had on poultry flocks. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (124)

FARM CRISIS - MANAGING FOR TOMORROW...Larry Bitney, extension economist, University of Nebraska, offers an overview of the farm crisis situation in Nebraska and programs underway in this area to help farm families to cope with financial difficulties. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (125)

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1498...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) If you have questions about meat and poultry preparation and safety, the USDA meat and poultry hotline can help you. Brenda Curtis talks with the coordinator about some of the questions the hotline gets every day.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1487...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Gramm-Rudman cuts in program benefits; Details on wheat and feed grain programs; Too much cotton?; New ag. yearbook.

CONSUMER TIME #980...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) National beef TV show; The calorie counter; Tomorrow's leaner meat cuts; Is car leasing for you; The avocado trend.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Wed, Feb. 19, Export outlook and coverage of press conference on Forest Service/Interior Dept. land swap; Thurs, Feb. 20, Catfish production; Fri, Feb. 21, Red meat production, Farm labor, Wheat report; Mon, Feb. 24, Livestock and poultry outlook; Tues, Feb. 25, Poultry production, Fruit outlook, Crop and weather update. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

OFF MIKE

Bob Zank (Ag News Network, Neillsville, WI) is lucky to be alive, according to his co-worker Vern Altmann. Bob was hit by a semi-truck while driving to Vern's house Tuesday morning, Feb. 11. His car is/was a "..big, old Buick and it probably save his life." He was in intensive care until Wednesday night, and his major injury apparently is a broken arm ... Speaking of broken limbs resulting in casts, Lynn Ketelsen (Linder Farm Net, Willmar, MN) is out of his cast and walking around unencumbered. He broke an Achilles tendon playing basketball back in November. Lynn reports he has two new co-workers, Norm Haugaard, commentator and market analyst, and Jeff Gould, assistant farm director ... Kelly Lenz (WIBW, Topeka, KS) reports the annual "Farm Profit" program the station co-sponsors with area agribusinesses had the second biggest turnout in its history. He said 400 farmers and their wives turned out for the one-day seminar. Kelly said just before the day ended they asked how many were optimistic and how many were pessimistic about the future of agriculture. Another surprise: 2/3rds were optimistic and only 1/3rd pessimistic ... Gary Truitt (Agri Business Net, Indianapolis, IN) experienced a bit of modern technology recently when he had some laser surgery done on an eye. No anesthesia, no nothing. Sit down, have the beam aimed, "zap" and that's it. No sensation, Gary said, except a sound in his ear from the scar tissue being vaporized. He says he's got more brightness and more color in the eye as a result and no painful aftereffects..."..except the bill." ... Our Florence Kelly took a call this week from Cliff Mitchell (KASM, Albany, MN). Cliff wanted info about how to get the "Dairy Market News." Florence contacted the right people who will send him what he needs to subscribe to this weekly publication. In the process, Florence learned from Cliff that it was 19 below zero in Albany. Brrrr!!

Jim Johnson

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Farm Broadcasters Letter
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